

You're Amazing Program

Evaluation Summary Report



*you're
amazing*

REPORT

Fall 1999

You Make Health Happen

Alberta
HEALTH SERVICES

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HEALTH - it's ALL the things you do

**There's more to health
than you might think.**

**You're Amazing
- You make health happen.**

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Executive Summary

In 1995-96 Alberta Health worked with multi-sectoral partners to create a Provincial Health Promotion Project that would encourage a new way of thinking about health. The project set out to build an understanding of the broad influences on health "Health is more than health care" and supported personal resources and responsibility "Health is everyone's business".



You make health happen

The program that resulted was called *You're Amazing*. It took a social marketing approach, which means it used marketing techniques, such as audience research and multiple messaging avenues, to help create social change – a new way of thinking about health – that would benefit the whole population. The program targeted young parents across Alberta from June 1997 until March 31, 1999. The project was planned, developed and delivered by numerous partners from both private and public sectors.

The purpose of *You're Amazing* was to help young parents in Alberta understand that health is broadly determined by factors such as social support, work, coping skills, income and childhood experiences. Moreover, it was intended that the program would help them apply this understanding in their everyday lives, and be reflected in their active involvement in their own and their family's health. *You're Amazing* was unique in taking the concepts about health determinants out to the public and in developing tools to assist in translating the concepts into behaviours. In addition, it created health promotion partnerships between government and corporate sponsors (a first in Alberta and perhaps in Canada).

Evaluation of this two-year program happened in several ways over the course of the project. It resulted in key findings about the program itself, about the awareness, roles and involvement of young parents related to their health, and about the partnerships that were formed, how they worked and how they influenced the results. The evaluation work was directed by the *You're Amazing* Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC).

External evaluators from the University of Alberta's Population Research Laboratory and Centre for Health Promotion Studies conducted the evaluations and produced a number of reports.

The ESC has used the information and key findings in these reports to create the *You're Amazing* Program Evaluation Summary Report. We hope that by summarizing our learnings from the *You're Amazing* experience, we can bring to decision makers and program planners valuable information that can help shape future health policy and programming.

Key Findings are:

- Young parents understand that well-being and health are influenced by a range of factors beyond health services and standard health practices, particularly in the area of social support. They don't readily identify work or education as factors affecting health. They see income and coping skills as barriers to health that can be difficult to change.
- Partnerships work well in health promotion, affecting quality of products and reach of program messages. Some young parents (13%) accurately recalled by name Pfizer, Alberta Credit Unions, RHAs and other *You're Amazing* sponsors and partners.
- *You're Amazing* reached 41% of the target audience. The *Amazing Family Kit* especially was a big success, with an overwhelming majority of recipients finding it informative, useful and supportive.
- Over the two years of the program, no trends were found in the survey data to demonstrate an increase in young parents' awareness and involvement in promoting health that might be attributable to the program. However, in-depth interviews and written comments on the Kit indicated that young parents found the program helpful for both awareness and involvement, because it provided positive reinforcement, reminders, new information and tools.
- *You're Amazing* made a successful beginning in engaging young parents in healthy attitudes and behaviours beyond standard practices such as fitness and nutrition. The approach could be easily adapted for other audiences and used as a basis for more direct, focused messages about one or a few of the factors that influence health. Partnership opportunities could be further widened and strengthened.
- Social marketing approaches can be effective in reaching target populations for health promotion programs. Five years or longer is needed for effective delivery of the *You're Amazing* types of messages.



Please read on to learn more about the program, the target audience, the partnerships, the learnings and our recommendations on future health promotion work.

Preface

In 1995-96

Alberta Health worked with multi-sectoral partners to create a Provincial Health Promotion Project that would encourage a new way of thinking about health. The project set out to build an understanding of the broad influences on health "**Health is more than health care**" and supported personal resources and responsibility "**Health is everyone's business**".

The program that resulted was called *You're Amazing*. It took a social marketing approach, which means it used marketing techniques, such as audience research and multiple messaging avenues, to help create social change – **a new way of thinking about health** – that would benefit the whole population. The program targeted young parents across Alberta from June 1997 until March 31, 1999. The project was planned, developed and delivered by numerous partners from both private and public sectors.

The purpose of *You're Amazing* was to help young parents in Alberta understand that health is broadly determined by factors such as social support, work, coping skills, income and childhood experiences. Moreover, it was intended that the program would help them apply this understanding in their everyday lives, and be reflected in their active involvement in their own and their family's health.

The work of the project was spearheaded by Alberta Health and Wellness (AHW) through a core project team, working in conjunction with a variety of partners. An initial Provincial Health Promotion Project (PHPP) Advisory Committee developed a strategic plan, which was approved in November, 1996. During the implementation phase, the AHW project team continued to work closely with partners through the *You're Amazing* Program Steering Committee and the *You're Amazing* Program Advisory Committee. (Names of partner organizations are listed at the end of this report.)

Communications/marketing consultants were a valuable part of the project team, especially since both the social marketing approach and partnerships with the corporate sector were relatively new aspects for AHW when the program was planned.



You're Amazing was unique in several ways. It took the concepts about health determinants out to the public and began to relate them to everyday life, developing tools to assist in translating the concepts into behaviours. It also began to measure awareness and behaviour related to health determinants. In addition, it created health promotion partnerships between government and corporate sponsors – a first in Alberta and perhaps in Canada. And it experimented quite successfully with offering opportunities to corporate workplaces to purchase print materials.

Evaluation of this two-year program happened in several ways over the course of the project. It resulted in key findings about the program itself, about the awareness, roles and involvement of young parents related to their health, and about the partnerships that were formed, how they worked and how they influenced the results. The evaluation work was directed by the *You're Amazing* Evaluation Steering Committee.

The *You're Amazing* Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC) included representatives from the program Advisory Committee as well as Alberta Health and Wellness (AHW). At the time of this Report, ESC members were:

- Co chair: Douglas Wilson, Centre for Health Promotion Studies and Public Health Sciences, University of Alberta;
- Co chair: Rick McHutchion, Project Consultant;
- Mary Gartrell, Project Team Leader, Population Health Strategies, Alberta Health and Wellness;
- Dennis Stokes, Manager, Alberta Environment;
- Betty Jeffers, Policy and Planning, Alberta Health and Wellness;
- Penny Mosmann, Health Promotion & Programs Branch, Health Canada;
- Sue Ludwig, Accountability, Alberta Health and Wellness; and
- Robert Storrier, Communications Branch, Alberta Health and Wellness.

External evaluators from the University of Alberta's Population Research Laboratory and Centre for Health Promotion Studies conducted the evaluations and produced a number of reports.

- *You're Amazing* Program Evaluation Final (technical) Report (Summer 1999)
- *You're Amazing* Partnership Evaluation Report (June 29, 1999)
- *You're Amazing* Monitoring Reports (January, June, December, 1998, June 1999)
- Summary Report of Responses to '*Amazing* Family Kit' Evaluation Forms (June 1999)

These reports are available on request from:

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The ESC has used the information and key findings in these reports to create this Summary Report. We hope that by summarizing our learnings from the *You're Amazing* experience, we can bring to decision makers and program planners valuable information that can help shape future health policy and programming.



What's *You're Amazing* All About?

The You're Amazing program is a social marketing initiative designed to promote the well-being and health of young Alberta parents, their families and their communities by raising their awareness of broad factors that influence health.

The program

- Was planned, developed and delivered through a strong partnership component.
- Used a variety of media and materials, linking with existing health promotion endeavors where possible.
- Provided innovative, practical resources that would help parents and families meet everyday challenges.
- Took an upbeat, 'fun' approach and a positive, supportive tone.
- Reflected the importance of the parent role and recognized the responsibility that people already take for their own, their family's and their community's health.
- Related primarily to five of the factors (determinants) that influence health:
 - childhood experiences
 - social support
 - income and finances
 - employment and working conditions
 - coping skillsand recognized the links among all factors.

These factors were selected from and guided by the concepts of population health and health determinants as discussed by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Advisory Committee on Population Health in *Strategies for Population Health: Investing in the Health of Canadians* (1994).

***"You're Amazing!
You Make Health Happen."***



The program was intended to:

- 1) Increase young parents' awareness of the broad factors influencing their own, their family's and their community's well-being and health;
- 2) Increase their awareness of their role in looking after well-being and health; and
- 3) Increase their active involvement in well-being and health.

As well, *You're Amazing* program planners decided to involve a variety of partners to help extend the reach of the messages, and to create new opportunities for partnerships between the health sector and other sectors that influence health. These partners included Regional/Provincial Health Authorities, corporate sponsors and supporting partners from within and beyond the health sector (for example, education, social services, environment, business, transportation). In this way there was a greater likelihood that program messages and approaches would be sustained beyond the two-year term.

How Much Did *You're Amazing* Cost?

Funds allocated to the program by AHW totalled \$1.5 million over three years. Of this, \$1.2 million was used for program implementation. This was supplemented with about \$300,000 in corporate sponsor funds and in-kind contributions. As well, many hours of staff time were contributed by Regional/Provincial Health Authorities (RHA/PHAs) and other program partners.



Why Young Parents?

Young parents were chosen as the target audience for *You're Amazing* because they are motivated to change by the transition to parenthood and are receptive to new information. Moreover, changes in attitudes and behaviours in these young parents may also influence their children and their communities. Access to young parents is relatively easy, for example through schools, daycares and public health offices of RHAs.

A secondary target audience for *You're Amazing* messages included all those 'influencers' of young parents who have regular contact with them – those with personal or family relationships (grandparents and extended family, neighbours and friends) as well as those with professional relationships (teachers, counsellors, physicians, clergy, etc).

Profile

From sources such as focus groups and a review of existing data, program planners confirmed that young parents were an appropriate audience, and learned that young parents generally:

- enjoy their children and their parent role, and love to talk about it
- readily acknowledge that their lives changed dramatically when they became parents, and that the transition was mainly a positive one
- appreciate and need support and reassurance to know they're doing a good job, and often want and need help from others in their family or community
- are concerned about finances, time management, finding time for themselves (and for partner relationships) and are open to ideas and help in dealing with these challenges
- are hungry for any and all information about how children grow and develop, and how they can help; are motivated by their children's needs
- like best to hear from their peers (other parents' ideas) and resist 'preachy' do's and don'ts
- like to get information that's practical, relevant and in small 'bites' - have little time to sit and read; watch TV for entertainment and relaxation, not for information
- think of 'health' at first as related to health services and personal behaviours such as exercise and nutrition, but are ready to hear messages about broad factors affecting health, especially if it's termed 'well-being'

In planning the evaluation, we found little or no formal information about the level of young parents' awareness and involvement with respect to broad influences on health.

From our baseline survey, we learned that:

- There are about 76,000 families in Alberta that include parents 18-30 years old.
- Women in this age group spend significantly more hours per day looking after children than men.
- About 65% are married, about 15% have common-law partners and about 15 % are single.
- Close to half (47%) have a high school education or less.
- Their average household income is \$30,000 to \$40,000 a year.



Who Were The Partners?

Program planners saw partnerships as an essential component of *You're Amazing* from the outset. The focus on broad factors influencing health demanded involvement of sectors beyond the traditional health sector. In addition, program planners set out to use a social marketing approach, which incorporates marketing techniques to create social change for societal benefit, in this case, a new way of thinking about health. This could be expected to be more effective if many partners were involved with understanding and delivering program messages. Three types of partnerships were included.

Regional/Provincial Health Authorities

RHA/PHAs were intended as key partners for 'grassroots' program delivery (integrating with existing health promotion programs), for building multisectoral partnerships at a regional level, and for potentially sustaining program approaches and concepts beyond the two-year scope of the program itself. All RHA/PHAs were represented on the *You're Amazing* Program Steering Committee.

Supporting Partners

There were 29 of them! These representatives of government departments and non-governmental organizations from both within and outside the health sector formed the *You're Amazing* Program Advisory Committee with the purpose of providing a broad context for the program, reflecting the scope of factors influencing health. Many Program Advisory Committee members had also been involved in developing the strategic plan in the early stages of project planning (PHPP Advisory Committee).

Corporate Sponsors

The corporate sector was seen as an important part of the necessary context for the program. Sponsorships were also meant to enhance the available funds and therefore the scope of the program. Sponsors contributing \$100,000 or more to support program implementation were 'major' sponsors, and were identified on all program materials. Sponsorships involving less financial commitment, or in-kind contribution, were also encouraged. Steering Committee membership included a representative from each major corporate sponsor, namely Alberta Credit Unions and Pfizer Canada Inc.



Credit Union



We're part of the cure

These partners formed the *You're Amazing* Program Steering Committee (RHA/PHAs and major sponsors) and Advisory Committee (supporting partners). The role of the Program Steering Committee was to guide and direct program implementation, through AHW's project team, with input from the Advisory Committee. Both Committees helped develop program components and materials, primarily through working groups. The two Committees communicated through periodic joint meetings, exchanging minutes of each other's meetings, and between-meeting updates from the project team.

How Did *You're Amazing* Get The Messages out?

Through the partners, a variety of program elements were produced and distributed to young parents (and their influencers) throughout Alberta, following the official provincial public launch in June 1997:

- a travelling, interactive display named "*You Ought to be in Pictures*" toured the province in the summer of 1997, and again in the summer of 1998 as "The Picture of Health". Instant photos were offered and participants wrote Tips for Healthy Living (1997) and Ideas for How to Make Health Happen (1998). The display visited 176 sites throughout Alberta in July/August 1997 and 182 sites in July/August 1998. It was also used at other times by program partners.
- tour distribution of **novelty items** (novelty pencils, bookmarks, t-shirts, ball caps, and 'frisbees') featuring the *You're Amazing* logo
- **radio promotions** of the *You're Amazing* program (April to September 1998 and ongoing) and of the 1997 tour (summer 1997)
- **posters** - "Health - it's ALL the things you do" and **brochures** - "There's more to health than you might think" (15,000 posters in October 1997 and 100,000 brochures in February 1998 for ongoing distribution)



- **wall calendars** for 1998 (78,000 in December 1997) and for 1999 (90,000 in November 1998) featured tips and ideas from Albertans

- **full-colour print advertisements** ran in five consecutive issues of *Calgary's Child* (July, September, and

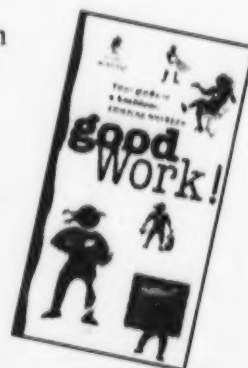
November, 1997, January and March, 1998) and later in all Alberta weeklies (April 1998). Program activity and events were also publicized in various newspapers, newsletters and television programs;

• the **Amazing Family Kit** was launched on October 22, 1998 (60,000). The Kit included a variety of tools to encourage active involvement of families in aspects of their own health –

- fridge magnet
- cookbook
- Good (for Nothing) Ideas book
- growth chart
- budget planner
- stickers and coupons
- resource sheets on Safety, Coping Skills, Child Care, Building a Support Network, Balancing Work and Home, and Where To Go For More.



• a workplace-oriented reprint of the Kit followed in March 1999 (13,500), featuring a new booklet about workplace well-being ("**Good Work!**"). Through partners, businesses were offered an opportunity to purchase quantities of these Kits for use in their workplaces. Ten companies chose to participate, increasing the distribution and reducing the cost per Kit.



Husky Oil



Be the part of the team



What We Wanted To Find Out

In evaluating *You're Amazing*, we wanted to find the answers to important questions about what the initiative had accomplished, and to obtain information for planning future programs that promote the health of Albertans.

1. How aware are young parents of the factors that influence health?
2. Did the *You're Amazing* messages reach young parents? If so, which product did the best job?
3. Did *You're Amazing* increase young parents' awareness and involvement in promoting health?
4. Did the partnerships contribute to the development and success of *You're Amazing*?
5. Could this approach be used in other places, or for other programs that promote health?

To answer these questions, we reviewed the information we had collected from the surveys, telephone interviews, program monitoring and partner focus groups described below.

How Did We Measure Effectiveness?

The program and its various elements were monitored as *You're Amazing* rolled out. Monitoring Reports were completed at four intervals during the two years of the program. These reports document the distribution and uptake of program elements underway during that period, and include media clippings, progress of partner involvement, sponsor recruitment, etc.

In addition, databases were built from "Tips" and "Ideas" received from the public at the two interactive displays that toured the province, and these were used in the development of further materials. The cornerstone element, the *Amazing* Family Kit, included a mail/fax-in feedback sheet to capture direct responses from young parent recipients.

In shaping the program and its elements (formative evaluation), program developers also used information from young parents themselves. Focus groups in various sectors of Alberta discussed program concepts at three different stages of early development. Other groups gave feedback on ideas for the Kit and the items it might include. On each print program element, a phone number was included, and an invitation to call

for more information. Calls to this number about *You're Amazing* were tracked, providing additional information about public response to various specific program elements.

Program outcomes were explored with young parents and their influencers through phone surveys, repeated with the same people at three time intervals. This included:

- A phone survey of a representative sample of 652 young parents before the program began (baseline).
- Followup phone surveys of the same parents during and after the *You're Amazing* program (423 at interim; 282 at final).
- In-depth phone interviews with a subset of 50 of these young parents at baseline and final times.
- Phone surveys with 221 influencers of young parents at baseline and final times.
- Closed-ended (quantitative) and open-ended (qualitative) questions.
- Questions about
 - the reach and impact of the *You're Amazing* program elements;
 - attitudes and awareness about well-being and health and the influencing factors;
 - health behaviours and changes made or intended, to promote well-being and health, in order to assess awareness of their role and involvement in looking after their own, their family's, and their community's well-being and health;
 - program and policy options relevant to the *You're Amazing* program and future health promotion initiatives in Alberta (at final survey only);
 - demographics.

Partnership process – We used multiple data collection methods to evaluate the partnership process. Focus groups of partners and the project team, document review, and a mail-back partner survey (closed- and open-ended questions) were all part of gathering information about the benefits and challenges of the partnerships. In this way all partner organizations had opportunity to participate, including people beyond the representatives on the Steering and Advisory Committees.

What We Found Out

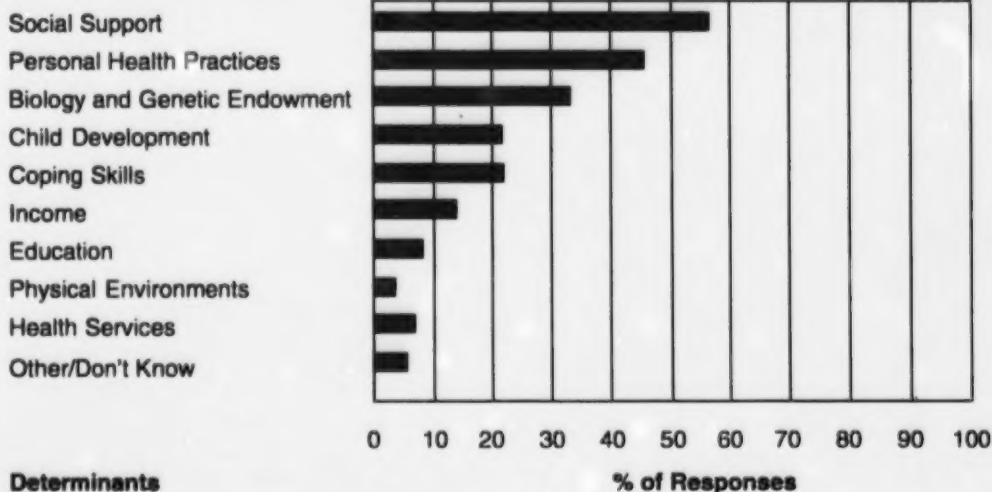
Q: How aware are young parents of the factors that influence well-being and health?

A: They are quite aware.

The baseline survey showed us that young parents already understand that well-being and health are influenced by a range of factors beyond health services and standard health practices, and that people can and do take responsibility for much of their own health. Similarly, the "influencers" group showed this same general awareness.

Factors Contributing to Family Well-Being and Health

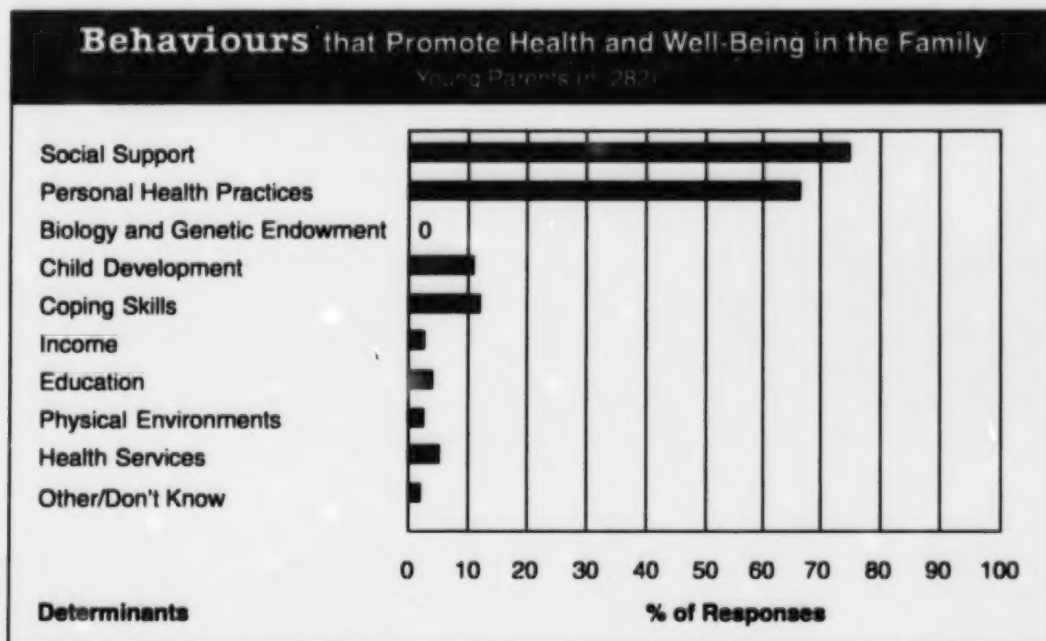
Young Parents (n = 282)



%s add to more than 100 because respondents could name up to four factors



When it came to taking action to promote health, factors related to personal health practices (for example, nutrition and fitness) and to social support (for example, time with family) were the areas most likely to be mentioned by young parents.

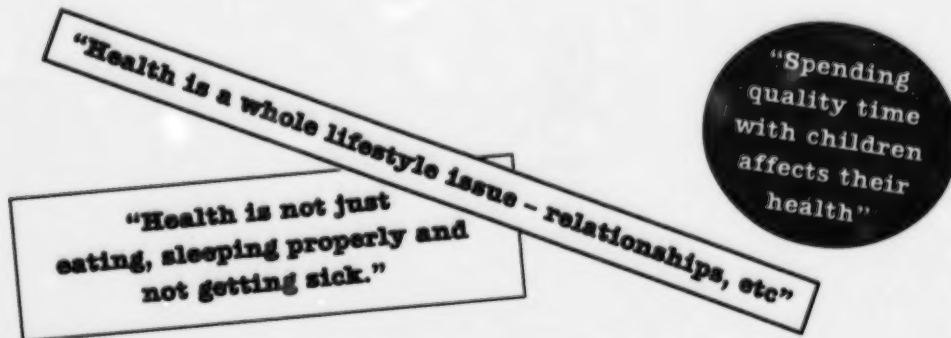


Q: Did the *You're Amazing* messages reach young parents? If so, which product did the best job?

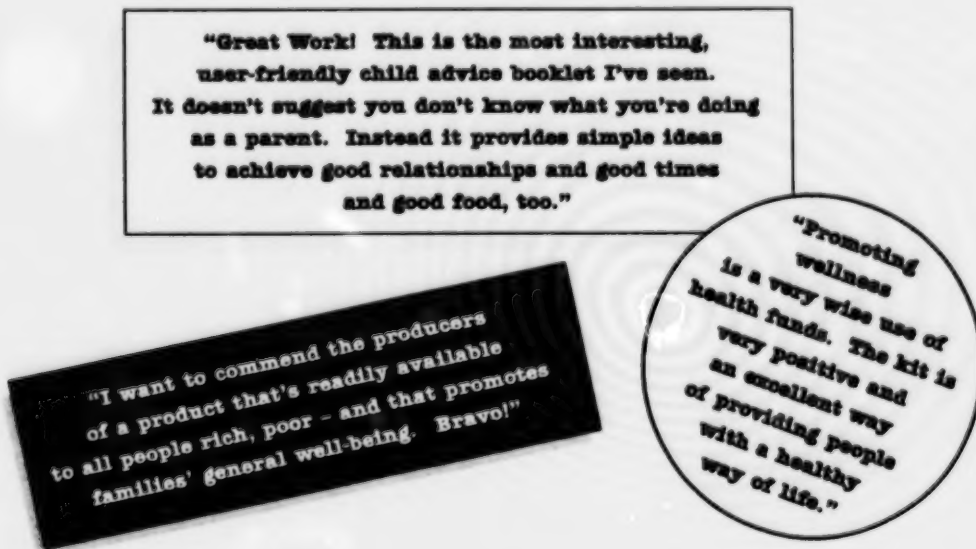
A: Yes, and the Family Kit was a big success!

You're Amazing did reach its target audience. Overall, 41% of the young parents in the final survey were aware of the *You're Amazing* Program. Although not directly comparable *ParticipAction*, for example, saw 20-25 % awareness of its message after about five years.

Just over half (55%) of the young parents who were aware of *You're Amazing* identified program messages, mostly reflecting actual message content.



The Family Kit reached the largest number of young parents interviewed, followed by the poster and the calendar. Responses indicated that 99% of the target parents either "liked" the kit or "liked it a lot". The overwhelming majority of comments expressed the opinion that the kit was useful, informative and supportive. In fact, many made a point of saying "Thanks!" to sponsors, partners, planners and producers of the kit.



Responses also showed that program messages were successfully communicated through the Kit. Nearly all (93%) of the parents who returned feedback forms reported a 'main message received' from the Kit and again, most reflected the intended content.

"I like that it promotes family togetherness and activities, and I think that is very important."



"It lets you know that there are different ways to go about personal health, and that the community has a big effect on health. Even your job and stress have a big impact on your health."

Q: Did *You're Amazing* increase young parents' awareness and involvement in promoting health?

A: No trends or effects were found that could be attributed to the program.

This was not entirely unexpected with a two-year term. Literature tells us that the effects of social marketing programs are often not apparent until well after the program has ended, and these effects may be generalized in public opinion rather than directly affecting individuals in the target group. We also knew that *You're Amazing* was only one of several influences on young parents during the implementation period, and that other influences could either reinforce or conflict with program messages.

Interestingly however, in the interviews with 50 young parents, about one in four parents stated that *You're Amazing* had influenced their awareness of health and the factors that affect health, and their involvement in their health, by providing positive reinforcement, reminders and new information.

Many of the comments on the Kit feedback forms also indicated that parents were using it as a tool to promote family health.

"Stickers are a great reward"

"I think this Kit is a truly Amazing idea.
It helps me with ideas to keep my son
involved...helps with money....
places to call for help."

Parents who were not influenced by *You're Amazing* said they did not have enough exposure to it to increase or influence their awareness of factors influencing health, or else, they already knew the health messages *You're Amazing* was putting out.

Q: Did the partnerships contribute to the development and success of *You're Amazing*?

A: Yes, definitely – particularly in quality and reach of program materials and messages.

From the outset of the project planning process, partnerships were considered to be key to the success of *You're Amazing*. The major contribution that program partners made was their wide dissemination of program messages and products. Partners carried out this role through the effective networks they had built or enhanced during their association with the program, and by using existing resources such as their own staff -- who worked hard to get the message out. Partners also provided valuable advice and other resources which contributed to the production of high quality social marketing products. As well, there were key individuals at provincial and regional levels who played a champion or facilitator role and helped to ensure the implementation, follow-through and expansion of the program.

Partnerships may also have added to the credibility and acceptability of program messages. Partner lists and corporate sponsors' logos appeared on program materials. When asked to recall sponsors and partners besides AHW, about 13% of young parents who were aware of the program accurately named Pfizer, Alberta Credit Unions, RHAs or other partners. And in responding to the final survey, three-quarters (77%) of young parents and two-thirds (67%) of influencers agreed that "Alberta Health (and Wellness) and private business corporations should work together and fund health promotion programs like *You're Amazing*".

Q: Could this approach be used in other places, or for other programs that promote health?

A: Yes, certainly — and next time could be even better!

Here is the *You're Amazing* approach to social marketing:

- use a variety of positive messages
- engage the public through interactive tools and
- work with a wide range of partners.

This approach seems to have made a successful beginning in supporting young parents' positive attitudes and healthy behaviours beyond reliance on health services, and beyond engaging in health practices like fitness and good nutrition. The *You're Amazing* approach could easily be adapted for other audiences. It could provide a basis for delivering more direct, focused messages about one or a few of the factors that influence health. Partnership opportunities could be widened and strengthened. Partnership structures and processes could be refined and simplified.

Experiences with *You're Amazing* should encourage spinoffs and further health promotion initiatives using this approach. Moreover, survey results tell us that people found this approach acceptable. Over half (53%) of young parents and influencers (62%) agreed that "Social marketing of health messages like *You're Amazing* is an effective way to promote the health of young parents". Over three-quarters of young parents (79%) and influencers (76%) agreed that "Young parents should be a high priority for health promotion programs in Alberta", and close to 90% of young parents (87%) and influencers (88%) agreed that "Informing young parents about the determinants of health helps to promote their health".



Specific aspects of this project experience, reflected in the following section, can be used to improve future initiatives.

What Was Learned From *You're Amazing*

About what people (especially young parents) know about health:

- They recognize that well-being and health are influenced by a range of factors beyond health services and standard health practices.
- They know/understand/do quite a lot about social supports (family and community related) and about personal health practices (nutrition, fitness – previous health promotion efforts have succeeded!).
- They don't readily identify work or education as factors that affect health.
- They frequently mention income (financial constraints) and coping skills (not enough time) as barriers to health, and see them as areas that can be difficult to change.
- They see the value of social marketing programs in health promotion.
- They recognize that what they do affects their children's health as well as their own.
- They agree that both government and individuals have responsibility for health.
- They agree that the corporate sector should be a partner in health promotion.



About partnerships:

- Partnerships work well in health promotion
 - they contribute to a high quality product
 - they expand the scope and reach of health promotion efforts
 - they add valuable breadth of context for planning and implementing health promotion efforts.
- Partnerships come in a wide variety of shapes, sizes and colours and all can add value
 - organizations outside the usual health-related organizations are interested and worthwhile partners in health promotion (for example, libraries and other government departments)
 - health system partners are key
 - the corporate sector includes organizations with different expectations and capacities (*You're Amazing* found that Pfizer was quite a different type of partner than Alberta Credit Unions).
- Partners need to have clear expectations and a chance to specify their own best role/contribution (both 'what' and 'when').
- Commitment to the partnership should be clear and written down, but leave room for roles to evolve and commitment to grow.
- An investment of time and resources is necessary to recruit partners and to establish, develop and maintain partner relationships.
- An effective facilitator or champion for the program within the partner organization is important.
- Contributing partners/sponsors may gain recognition and be identified by name by the target audience. Additional strategies should be developed to make partners more visible.



About health promotion programs:

- Social marketing approaches can be effective in reaching target populations for health promotion.
- Five years or longer is needed for effective, credible delivery of these kinds of messages; two years is only enough to begin.
- Target audience specification is important; age definition may not be as important as the roles people have. (*You're Amazing* defined parents' age parameters, which sometimes created unnecessary barriers. Defining our audience as parents of toddlers and preschoolers might have worked better.) Key to social marketing is knowing your target audience.
- Interactive, practical tools are effective in encouraging healthy behaviours.
- Young parents react favourably to positive, supportive messages and attractive, high quality products.
- Messages need to be clear and simple. Sometimes it's difficult to be comprehensive at the same time! (The health determinants message is a complex one and may need to be broken down into simpler terms.)
- Messages can reinforce what people already know, as well as provide new ideas; both can be effective in encouraging healthy behaviours.
- Phasing programs may assist with defining partners' capacities and roles. For example, some *You're Amazing* partners (especially corporate) would have preferred to see products before getting involved, while some partners (especially health system) appreciated being involved early in developing products and would have liked even earlier involvement, in strategic planning.
- Flexibility for local adaptation of province-wide initiatives may be difficult and time-consuming, but it is important to success.



About evaluating programs:

- Plan a type of evaluation appropriate to the timelines of a project. Process and audience response can be assessed after a short period. To assess outcomes, longer timelines are needed, as well as specific measures and baseline data.
- Plan for evaluation of process as well as outcome. Valuable information on partnerships was gained from the *You're Amazing* experience. This was minimally planned for in the beginning, when the focus was more on evaluating outcomes.
- Establish clear, measurable short term objectives regarding program reach and impact on the target audience, as well as longer term expected outcomes about attitudes and behaviours.
- Valid and reliable measures and indicators of health determinants are not readily available. More work is needed in order to know how to accurately assess those attitudes and behaviours that relate to health promotion, particularly given all the complexities of interaction among health determinants. Until outcome indicators are more highly developed, be realistic about outcome-oriented evaluation.
- Rigorous evaluation takes time and resources. Although we need to be realistic about outcome-oriented evaluation results, it's still important to plan for the time and commit to the costs needed to measure results over several years as accurately and comprehensively as possible.
- Use a variety of sources and ways of collecting information. Qualitative information - the words used by young parents themselves in semi-structured telephone interviews - helped our understanding of what the quantitative results meant and added valuable depth and texture to our information. This was also the case with written comments from parents who received an *Amazing* Family Kit.
- Be flexible in evaluating programs such as *You're Amazing*. It's easier to plan an evaluation if products and messages are clearly defined or already developed at the beginning. However, this may miss the value in the evolution of products and messages which are clarified and refined with input from all partners over the course of implementation.



Where To From Here?

This brings us back to what project planners had in mind several years ago when they set the *You're Amazing* program in motion. After all is said and done, one thing remains clear. *Health is everybody's business*. *You're Amazing* has provided a new beginning for all of us - information, products and partners which can help build further health promotion social marketing initiatives that focus on key factors influencing health.

You're Amazing has provided evidence on what young parents know about the factors influencing well-being and health. There is also data about young parents' involvement in promoting their own health and the health of their families. We know that people are ready to think about health as "more than health care", and as more than personal health behaviours such as fitness and nutrition. What's more, they are ready to act on this understanding, given appropriate tools.

We also have some excellent marketing products to build on and to re-use/recycle - the name, the logo, and the *Amazing* Family Kit items in particular.

You're Amazing has also offered us new ideas about where to find partners and how to involve them in sharing messages about health and about the need for everyone to get involved.

What's Needed?

Regional leadership is needed to set priorities and take action on new health promotion programs and new audiences, in order to **build on what we now know**. Baseline knowledge will allow new efforts to address those factors not strongly identified by young parents. Factors like employment and education are prime examples. Tools for action could be marketed to encourage a positive approach to factors like coping skills and income. Products and messages can be adapted and used in future social marketing initiatives. This sustains and reinforces the *You're Amazing* messages, as well as building on its credibility and adding this value to 'jump start' a new program.

There is an opportunity here for Regional Health Authorities, working with partners across all sectors, to demonstrate leadership in health promotion initiatives. Provincial facilitation can help. As well as setting priorities and taking action within their own regions, RHAs might want to consider the potential for increasing effectiveness by working together with other RHAs and other sectors to set collective priorities for several or all regions.

Provincial leadership is needed to continue to **refine the measurement of success** in health promotion. The evaluation of *You're Amazing* has made a start in identifying and testing indicators and measures related to wellness. It is evident that more work is needed here in order to truly know whether progress is being made, which strategies make a difference and how. Academic researchers working in partnership with community practitioners are key to this effort.

You're Amazing focused on young parents and families to encourage thinking about health in a new way. Responses from both young parents and their influencers, however, recognized that more work on policy and supportive environments in communities and workplaces is critical to improving the health of the population.

The need to continue to **broaden the networks** is a challenge at both regional and provincial levels and for all sectors. *You're Amazing* has opened some new doors with sectors beyond the traditional health system. The experience of this program has taken us all a step further in strengthening the capacity of regions and of provincial jurisdictions to work with corporate sponsors and to involve non-traditional partners in health promotion. At the provincial level, collaborative efforts are actively encouraged across all departments. The concept and the evidence that "health is everyone's business" gives AHW a lead provincial role in creating and expanding this network, and RHAs the same lead role at a regional level.



*you're
amazing*

**You make health
happen**

There IS a new way of thinking about health, and the challenge now is to maintain momentum. By building on new knowledge and quality products, measuring success in new ways, and broadening partnerships, *amazing* things can happen in health promotion.

Provincial Health Promotion Project Advisory Committee (1995-96)

Alberta Association of Registered Nurses
Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission
Alberta Community Development
Alberta Economic Development and Tourism
Alberta Education
Alberta Environmental Protection
Alberta Labour
Alberta Medical Association
Alberta Public Affairs Bureau
Alberta Public Health Association
Alberta Family and Social Services, Child Welfare Services
Alberta Family and Social Services, Commissioner of Services for Children
Alberta Municipal Affairs
Centre for Health Promotion Studies, University of Alberta
Health Canada
Provincial Health Authorities of Alberta Health
Alberta Health – Prevention and Promotion/Population Health,
Communications, Health Policy

You're Amazing

Program Steering Committee (1997-99)

Chinook Regional Health Authority
Palliser Regional Health Authority
Headwaters Regional Health Authority
Calgary Regional Health Authority
Health Region #5
David Thompson Regional Health Authority
East Central Regional Health Authority
Westview Regional Health Authority
Crossroads Regional Health Authority
Capital Regional Health Authority
Aspen Regional Health Authority
Lakeland Regional Health Authority
Mistahia Regional Health Authority
Peace Regional Health Authority
Keeweenaw Regional Health Authority
Northern Lights Regional Health Authority
Northwestern Regional Health Authority
Provincial Mental Health Advisory Board
Pfizer Canada Inc.
Alberta Credit Unions
Alberta Health and Wellness – Health Strategies, Population Health Strategies,
Communications

You're Amazing **Program Advisory Committee (1997-99)**

Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission
Alberta Association of Registered Nurses
Alberta Cancer Board
Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research
Alberta Centre for Well Being
Alberta Community Development
Alberta Community Health Nurses Society
Alberta Education
Alberta Environmental Protection
Alberta Family and Social Services – Day Care Programs, Child Welfare, Income Support
Alberta Foster Parents' Association
Alberta Health and Wellness – Population Health Strategies, Communications
Alberta Heart Health Program
Alberta Labour
Alberta Library Trustees Association
Alberta Motor Association
Alberta Pharmaceutical Association
Alberta Public Health Association
Alberta Transportation and Utilities
Centre for Health Promotion Studies, University of Alberta Health
Council of Medical Officers of Health
Dairy Nutrition Council of Alberta Health
Dieticians of Canada (Alberta)
Employer Committee on Health Care
Health Canada
Nechl Institute
Nobody's Perfect, Alberta Health
Provincial Be Fit for Life Network, Provincial Fitness Unit
Schools Come Alive

You're Amazing **Corporate Sponsors**

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